

143.

A DISCOVERY OF Divine Mysteries ;

Wherein is Unfoulded *SECRET THINGS* of
the KINGDOM of GOD:

B E I N G

A TESTIMONY

- I. Concerning *Life and Death*, with their several Fruits and Effects distinguished.
- II. Concerning the *Mystery of GOD* and *Godliness*; and concerning the *Mystery of the Devil*, and *Iniquity*.
- III. Concerning *true Liberty of Conscience*, what it is in it self, and how obtained; And what the *true Guide and Rule* is of the *Exercise of Conscience*.
- IV. Concerning the *Diversity of Judgments in Religion*; the Cause and the Effect thereof, and the Means to bring to Unity.

All which are Published for the Edification of such as desire
to know the Truth:

By a Servant of Truth, *Edward Burroughs*.

London, Printed for Robert Wilson, at the Sign of the *Black-spread-Eagle* and *Wind-mill*, in *Martins Le Grand*, 1661.



THE PREFACE.

THE Light of the Day of GOD Almighty, is arisen upon us in our day; and the shinings forth thereof, is with great clearness and force, even as the Sun at noon-day, and many are come to the glorious Appearance thereof, and to walk in its Light with much joyfulness: for, as the Wise man said, The Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the Eye to behold the Sun: And so fully is our Morning-Sun now appeared, that the Upright in heart may walk and not stumble, and the poor in spirit may run in the path of Life, and not fall; for, indeed we may say the Night is spent, and the Day is come; therefore let us walk in the Day, and put on the Armour of Light, as many as are made the Children thereof.

And where the Light of this Sun is arisen, and in whose hearts it shineth, it cannot but give some Testimony through such an one, of its own Glory, Vertues and Excellency, to them that sit yet in darkness and in the bondage of Corruption, that they also may see the same Light and Glory arise on their Tabernacle: for 'tis the property of this spiritual heavenly Light, to shine forth out of darkness, and to give light to such as have long sate in darkness, that their souls may live, and be refreshed with the Light of the Living; And for this cause do we labour and spend, and are spent, accounting nothing too dear for us, that the Light of Truth may shine abroad and guide the Upright in the perfect way, till the Elect be gathered into the pasture

THE PREFACE.

of Eternal Life, and the Sun so elevated on the Firmament of Joy and Praises, never to go down, but the saying fulfilled, There shall be no night, but the light of the Sun shall be as the light of seven dayes.

These following Testimonies were written at divers times, as the Lord drew forth my spirit through the motions of his Life in me; some of them, some years since; and being cast by among bundels of Manuscripts, and now lately come to my sight, and looking them over, I have thought good to send them abroad, as being of service to many: And this is the Occasion and End of my present publishing these things. And to the Judgment of the Spirit of God in all the Saints, do I commend my Labours, and my self to be approved;

Who am a Friend to all men.

*Westmoreland, the 25th of
the 7th Month, 1661.*

E. B.

CHAP.

C H A P. I.

*A TESTIMONY concerning LIFE and DEATH,
with their several Fruits and Effects distinguished.*

THere is only *Life* and *Death*, and there is but only *Life* and *Death* in the whole Creation, that *ruleth* and *reigneth*, in, and among, and over all the *Children* of *men*; and all the *Children* of *men* upon the face of the Earth are under the Government and Dominion of *Life*, or of *Death*, in whatsoever they are, and in whatsoever they do; and *Life* or *Death* hath the Rule and Government in every Creature, in every Exercise, whether of *Works* or *Words*; and all People upon the Earth are subject to the Government of *one*, or the *other*, and bring forth the Fruits and Works in obedience to *Life* or to *Death*, and shews them forth in visible appearance. Now these *two*, (to wit) *Life* and *Death*, are *contrary* one to the other, in *being*, in *nature*, in *works* and *fruits*; and each of these are known and distinguished the one from the other, in *being*, in *nature*, in *fruits* and *effects*, which diversly they bring forth in this World; and each of them hath a Kingdom and Government in himself, distinct from, and *contrary* each to other; and each of them have their several Subjects, which also are *contrary* in *birth* and *generation*, in *quality* and *kind*; over which they rule and govern, and to whom they give distinct Portions and Heirships in this World, and hereafter: And where *Life* rules and reigns, *Death* is held in captivity and bondage; and where *Death* *lives*, the *Life* *dies*; and where one of these brings forth *fruit*, the other is *barren*; for they agree not in one, but are in *all things* *contrary*: and the Subjects of the *one* are *always* *opposing* and *striving* against the Subjects of the *other*: And between *Life* and *Death* there is continual *war* and *strife* among the Creatures, who are the Subjects of the one of them, in whatsoever man is, and in what he doth.

First, concerning *Life* I will speak. *Life* was in the beginning with God, and is without descent, and God is *Life* in himself, without *beginning* or *ending* of *time*, *place*, or *matter*; and

and *Life* put forth it self out of its invisible being, into *work* and *action* in the beginning of the World, and appeared in visible *operations* and *works*, and brought forth *all Creatures*, and *all things*, into visible appearances; and *Life* was the Author of all, the Beginning and Foundation of all; and *Life* was and is that Being and Vertue of all things that are, and it was the *Joy* and *Delight* of all things that it self brought forth; for all *Things* and *Creatures* subsisted through it, and it gave *breath* and *life* to all *Creatures*; and *Life* blessed them all, and in it were all *Creatures* at *Unity*, being framed and brought into visibility, and for the *pleasure* of *Life*, which was all in all in the beginning; and there was a sweet *concurrence* and *harmony* in the whole Creation through the *power* and *being* of *Life* in the midst of all *Creatures*, through which the whole Creation was made and framed by the Eternal Word of *Life*, and through which they stood and did remain in *blessedness*; and *Life* ruled and reigned in every *Creature* that was brought forth, and was the glory and substance thereof: for *Life* was and is that *only begotten* of the Father, the *Son* and the *Heir* of the *Everlasting Father*, his express *Image* and *Brightness*; being *one* with the *Father*, not separated or divided from him.

And as for *Death*, it was not yet known, nor had it any place in the Creation; it had yet received no Power, nor Kingdom, nor Government, neither was it in being: But *Life* was all, over all, through all, and in all, in the *beginning*, before *disobedience* and *transgression* entered to war against *Life*; But *Life* was Prince, Ruler and Governour, in and over all the works of the Creator. And *Life* in its Being is *God*, and *God* is *Life*; and in its Government, and Fruits, and Effects, is *Purity*, *Righteousness*, *Truth*, *Holiness*, *Meekness*, and all the works that are just and equal according to *God*, and like Him, and which shewes him forth in the Creation; and this was, and it was thus in the beginning, before *Death* entred into the *World*, or had a Kingdom; But it is written, *the Devil abode not in the Truth*, but went out of the *Truth*; and he is the king of *Death*, and hath the power of it; he went out of the *Power* of *God*, and out of the *Life*, by which all things was made and created, and abode not in the *Truth*, nor in the *Life*, to live, and act, and speak in that, but desired to be, and became to be something

thing of himself without God ; and he spoke of himself, and acted of himself, without the *Power* and *Life*, and also contrary to the *Power* and *Life* of the Creator, being separated from it, and become a distinct being of himself ; and then having lost his *state* and *first condition*, thus became an Enemy to *Life* and *Truth*, and became the King of *Death* ; and he was the first of *Death's* race, and he holds the *Power* of it unto this day ; he being gone out of the *Truth*, and out of the *Power* and *Life* of God, and become a distinct being of himself, having a Kingdom of his own to promote in opposition to the Kingdom of God. Then he drew mankind out of the *Power* and *Truth*, and *Life* ; beguiled *Eve* and *Adam*, as you read in the Scriptures, and they lost the *Life* & *Power* (even all feeling of it, and *comfort* in it) by which they were created and made ; and they also transgressed and acted contrary to the *Life* and *Power*, and acted of themselves, and spake of themselves, without the *Power* and *Life* of their Creator, being separated from it ; and *were* and *did* something of *themselves* without God the Creator : and then the *Power* and *Life* cast them out of all Peace, Joy, and Happiness, into the *Earth*, and into *Death* ; and *Death* became King and Prince over mankind : And they had no more possession of *Life*, nor *blessedness* by it in their separated estate, neither did it any longer reign in them ; but they having transgressed against the *Life*, and acted of *themselves*, and spoken of themselves, without the *leadings* and *movings* of the *Life*, this was their transgression ; They went out of the *Power* and *Life* in all *motions* and *actions*, and then *Life* drove them forth of its *Good Pleasure* into the *Earth*, separate from its *vertues* and *peace*, and into *Death*, which is contrary to it self, to live in *anguish* and *sorrow* : and so when the *Devil* was gone out of the *Truth*, and had led *Mankind* out of the *Truth*, and out of *Life*, and thereby they were all separated from *Life*, and drove out from God, out of his *pleasure*, into his *wrath* ; Then became *Death* to have a being in Mankind, and great authority, and not before ; and then *Death* began his Kingdom in the VVorld, and over it, and he set up his *Rule* and *Government* in, and among, and over all the Children of men.

And so from *Transgression* came *Death*, that was its beginning,

Man having transgressed against the *Life* that brought him forth ; and being separated from *Life*, then *Death* took place, and its Kingdom was established over the World, and in all the Children of men, in opposition to *Life*, and its Government and Kingdom ; and *Death* reigns from *Adam*, (so saith the Scripture) and the *Life* was transgressed against, and so provoked into an absence, and to withdraw it self into *invisibilty* from the enjoyment of Mankind, that it should not be felt nor perceived of Him to comfort him ; and then the whole body of *Death* came upon Man, to load his Conscience and vex his Soul : and *Death*, and only *Death* hath a Preheminence over all in Transgression, and is established into a Kingdom, over sinful Subjects, who are under its Command ; and hath its Rule and Government, and brings forth its Works and Fruits in Mankind, contrary to *Life*, and in opposition to it, and to its Kingdom and Power, and opposeth the Kingdom and Power of *Life* (the Creator;) and in its Nature, and all its Fruits and VWorks, it is contrary and opposite to *Life*, and its VWorks and Fruits ; and through *Death* is the whole Creation in its exercise by Man perverted from the right use and end ordained of God ; and out of *Death* proceedeth all Evil, as *Lying, Swearing, Drunkenness and Whoredom, Pride, Strife,* and every *evil work and word* : These things are the Fruits and VWorks of *Death* ; and *Death* governs the Children of men in the practice of all these things ; and in transgression *Death* lives, and acts, and speaks through Men and VWomen ; and *Death* rules in them, and hath perverted them in all their wayes ; for they have given their Power to it, and it wholly captivates them, and is established over them, and hath the dominion in them, and *Life* is swallowed up of it : And this Kingdom of *Death* opposeth God, and the Kingdom of *Life*, and exalts it self against *Life*, and hath its operation in the Creature, in all manner of *unrighteousness*, bringing forth daily such *words, works, fruits and effects*, as doth oppress and is a burden unto the *Life*, and unto the God of *Life and Death*; and its Kingdom doth continually war and strive against *Life* and its Kingdom, and the *one* opposeth the *other* through all Generations since the beginning : for the Devil is the King of *Death*

Death, and hath the power of it, and he is King in its *Govern-ment*, and Ruler in its *Dominion*; and this is the state of all the Children of men in Transgression, *Death* rules, and the kingdom of *Death* reigns in them, and it brings forth *cursed fruits* through them, and they are *subjects* thereof, and in *obedience* thereunto in all things: And through *Death*, which hath power over them, are they separated from *Life*, and have no part nor portion therein, because of *Death*, that hath separated them, and veiled and clouded them, and loads their Consciences.

But now the Promise of the God of *Life*, is, to restore *Mankind* out of *Death* and *Darkness*, and that *Life* shall reign again, and *subdue Death*, and *destroy it* and its *Kingdom*, and *swallow it up*; and this is the Promise of the Father: For, in *transgression* *Death* hath subdued *Life*, and overcome it in Mankind; But in the Restoration, *Life* shall swallow up *Death*, and subdue it, and overcome it: and this comes to passe through the rising again of *Life* from under *Death*, which hath held it in *bondage*; and *Life* that made the World in the beginning, and gave to all things *life* and *substance*, as I have said; which *Life*, in its measure in Mankind, hath been overcome and swallowed up in *Transgression*: That *Life* shall appear, though in another manner of appearance than it did in the beginning; for then it appeared freely of it self without opposition, and brought forth the *first Creation*; But now it doth appear through great *opposition*, and through all that doth oppose it in this *second Creation*, when *Life* comes again to reign over *Death*, and swallow it up, and *overcome* and *subdue* it; and who comes to witness this (the *new Creation*) they know *Life* appearing through *opposition*, and through the *destroying* of *Death*, and all its *works* and *fruits*: for *C H R I S T* is the *Life*, and he is the *Seed* of the *Woman*, which *bruisseth* the *Serpents head*, who hath the power of *Death*; *Life* bruisseth his *Head*, breaketh his *Government*, and destroyes his *Works*, as it appeareth and riseth in the *Creature*; and *Death* and its *works* opposeth *Life* and its *manifestation* and *appearance*, and gainsayes it, and often quencheth it in its *appearances*.

Now the *first appearance* of *Life* in the *Creature*, it *convinceth* and *reproveth* the *works* of *Death*, and the *words* that proceed

from *Death*, which are *unrighteous words*, and *unrighteous works*; and *Life* when it rises, it *reproves* them and *condemns* them: and though *Death* doth oppose and gainsay the Operation of *Life*; yet *Life* works through, and overcometh, subdueth, and swalloweth up *Death*, and destroyes all its works in the *second Creation*: and *Life* again comes to take possession of the *Creature*, which it made in the beginning; and *Life* comes to-reign again, whose Right it is to reign; for, by it the Creature *Mankind*, and all Creatures were in the beginning formed and brought forth, and therefore it is its Right to reign, and to have the dominion over the works of its own hands, whom since the beginning in Transgression, the *Devil* and *Death*, and his seat of *Government* hath had the possession of: and *CHRIST* the Power of God, and the *Life*, hath been as it were dispossessed: and thus the *first Creation* hath been defaced, and lost its *Glory*; and it hath been corrupted and degenerated quite from the *perfect state* as it was created in; and *Mankind* hath been servant to another Power, and led captive by another Power than the Power that made him, and another Government hath been established over him, and another Law hath exercised him than the Government and Law of the Creator, (to wit) the Power and Government, and Law of *Death* have had the *Rule*, *Government* and *Exercise* of Man, and of the *old Creation*, and hereby all things have been diverted from their proper and perfect place and service, to which they were ordained in the beginning, by reason of Transgression and the reigning of *Death*; and Man hath been held in Captivity, and in sore Bondage, and subject to all *miser*y and *distress*, deprived of *unity* with his *Maker*, and deprived of the comfortable use and benefit of the Creation; so that of all Creatures he hath been the most miserable, being held in Bondage and Captivity under the power of *Death*, which hath ruled and reigned over him, and in him, being alwayes subject to *Death*, and subject to the *Curse* and *Anger* of the LORD; and subject to *doublings* and *fears*, and subject to *continual misery* and *sorrow*: and all this is, because *Death* hath reigned and had dominion; even that which at first in the beginning of Transgression, betrayed him of the *life* and *fellowship* with God, that got possession it self to reign,
and

and to have the Power, which ever since hath reigned, and al-
ways doth, till the appearance of the *Life* again, which doth
appear in the Creature for this end, to *overcome* and *subdue*
Death, and destroy his *works*, that it self may *reign* and free the
Creation from its *degeneration* and *corruption*, and free Man-
kind from his *bondage* and *captivity*, and from his *misery* and all
his *trouble*, which is come upon him by reason of *Death*.

And this comes to passe in the *New-Creation* when *Life* is
born again, to *rule* and *reign* again, and to swallow up *Death*,
and to subdue it wholly, and its *Kingdom* and *Government*. And
then Man again is become a *Son of GOD*, an *Heir of Sal-*
vation, and no more *Death* reigns in him, nor hath power over
him, when he is restored out of *Transgression*; then, as *Death*
hath *reigned* and had power in *Transgression*, *Life* shall so *reign*
in and over the Creature, in the *New-Creation*, when that is
brought forth, as *Death* hath *reigned* in the *Old-Creation* in
Transgression and *Disobedience*: And *Life* will arise to *reign*
and *rule* over all, and in all, though it be through *great opposi-*
tion; the Body of *Death* shall be *put off*, and the Government of
Death shall be *subdued*, and all the Works, Fruits and Effects
of *Death* shall be *destroyed* and *done away*, and its place shall no
more be found, so as to bring forth Fruit; for its *sling* shall be
taken away, and shall no more wound, nor pierce, nor hurt the
Creature: *For the sling of Death is Sin*, and that hath wounded
and hurt the Creature; and when this comes to passe, then
there is *glory* and *rejoycing* over all, for *Life* hath swallowed up
Death, and *overcome* it, and the cause of *Sorrow* is removed and
taken away, and the *Kingdom of Life* is established in the
Creature, and is set upon the Top of *Death's Kingdom*, and
keeps it *under*; and if there be but a *motion* of *Death* that would
spring up, or appear in the Creature, *Life* judgeth it down,
and condemns it. And this Kingdom, is *Righteousness*, *Joy*,
and *Peace*, full of *Justice*, *Righteousness* and *Equity*, and there
is nothing in it that doth defile or destroy, or bring sorrow or
misery; but *Life* rules over all that, and *subdues* the Cause
thereof, and removes every thing that would imbondage or
captivate the Creature in evil: And this *Kingdom* is not of
this World, but from *Heaven* and heavenly; and the Birth im-
mortal.

mortal is Heir thereof, which receives the *Crown* and the *Kingdom of Eternal Life*.

Now the *Kingdom of Death* is of *this World*, which is defiled and degenerated : *Cain* was a Subject of this *Kingdom*, and *Eſau* that was a Reprobate, and *Judas* that betrayed the *Life*, and all the *Ungodly* and *Generation of the Wicked* since the beginning, they were all of the *Kingdom of Death*, and the *Kingdom of Death* ruled in them, and brought forth its *works* through them, and its *exercise* in *their hearts* and in *their lives*; And through its power they opposed and gainsayed the *Life*, and they fought against the *Kingdom of Life* and *Righteousness*; and such were the *Pharisees* who put *Christ* to death, who is the *Life*. *Death* reigned over all these, and they were of the *Stock of Death*, and they were of *this World*, and had their *Conversation below* in the *earthly things*; and knew not the *Life*, nor its *Government*, but were strangers to it, and enemies to it, as all are at this day, who are *transgressors* against the *Life*, and all such are subject to the *Curse*, to *Sorrow* and *Misery*, and the *Anger* of the *L O R D*; but who comes to feel the *Life*, and the *obedience* to it again, *Death* is destroyed through *Death*; for, through the *death* of *Death*, *Death* comes to be *destroyed*, and no otherway : which the *Life* works, and the *Life* works through *Death*, and *overcomes* it, and *swallows* it up; and this is the *second Creation*, and the *new Creation*, where *Life* reigns over all, and doth possess the *Creature*, as it did before *Transgression*. The *Life* is the *Light*, and the *Life* is the *Law*, and *Life* lives, moves, and acts the *Creature*; and *CHRIST* who is the *Life*, becomes *all in all*; and blessed are they who wait for this, and do witness it : to such am I known in these things, where the *Kingdom of Death* is overcome and swallowed up of *Life*.

C H A P. I I.

A Testimony concerning the Mystery of GOD and Godliness; and, concerning the Mystery of the Devil and Iniquity.

There are two great *Mysteries* in their invisible being, and in manifestation to us in the world, (that is to say) the *Mystery of GOD and Godliness*, and the *Mystery of the Devil and Iniquity*. These are two great *Mysteries*, which do discover and act themselves forth in, and among, and through the children of men in this Creation; and these two *Mysteries* are contrary one to the other, in *being*, in *nature*, in *works*, in *fruits* and *effects*; and they are in strife one against the other, the one continually opposing the other, and striving for the Creature, *Mankind*, to be the Instrument to display themselves through, in visible appearance; for the Creature *Man and Woman* is a Vessel wherein these *Mysteries* are contained, and whereby these *Mysteries* do shew themselves forth in the world; and all the sons of *Adam* upon the face of the Earth are possessed with, and of, one of these, (that is to say) *The Mystery of GOD*, or *the Mystery of the Devil* do manifest themselves forth through every *Man and Woman*; and through all the sons of *Adam* upon the face of the Earth, the *works*, *fruits* and *effects* of one of these are brought forth.

And as for the *Mystery of GOD*, it is *infinite* and *eternal* in being, and which *was*, and *is*, and *is to come*, without *beginning* or *end*: and this *Mystery* reacheth it self forth more or less in every creature upon the face of the whole Earth, and is the *Life*, and *Being*, and *Substance* of all Things; and all Creatures upon the face of the Earth, whether *movable* or *immovable*, is a partaker of this *Mystery*; and this *Mystery* is veiled and hidden secretly *in* and *under* all things that have a being, and whatsoever the Creature brought forth, even in the greatest appearance thereof; and its *goodness* and *virtue*, in what form or appearance soever, is but the *production*, or the *manifestation*.

tion of the *Mystery* [G O D] for the *life* of every Creature, and the *vertue* of every Creature is a *Mystery*, and proceedeth out of the *great Mystery* of G O D, who is *Life* it self, *Vertue* it self, *Goodness* it self, and *Being* it self; and is the *Goodness*, and the *Vertue*, and the *Life* and *Being* of all Things and Creatures upon the face of the Earth; so that every thing that hath a being, even the *Wicked* and *Ungodly*, are not without this *Mystery* in some manner or other; for by Him every Creature is, and hath its first being.

But now more perfectly doth the *Mystery* of G O D appear in his Servants, and in his Children who are born of Him, and begotten by Him, and they have the *sence* and *feeling*, and *understanding* of this *Mystery* more than any other Creatures; and this is their *Glory* and *Crown* above all other Creatures upon the face of the whole Earth; for they only, I say, who are redeemed to God, and born of the Spirit, they are them that have the *sence*, and *feeling*, and *understanding* of this *Mystery*, even of the *Mystery* of G O D, *infinite*, *endless* and *eternal*. And though this *Mystery* be hid in all other Creatures, and manifesting it self through them, yet this *Mystery* is not *known* to them, nor *understood* of them, nor of any other Creature (I say) besides the *Children* of the Lord, in whom this *Mystery* is only revealed; for they are them through whom more manifestly and plainly this *Mystery* is made manifest, and to them *revealed*, and *known*, and *felt* in their Understandings; and they have the enjoyment thereof who *know* God, and are *known* of him, and are entered into *Covenant* with him, into *Everlasting Covenant* of Joy and Peace; and through them doth this *Mystery* display it self, even in the sight of all Creatures, in works of *Righteousness*, and works of *Purity*, and works of *Goodness*, of *Mercy*, of *Truth*, of *Peace*, and of *Wisdom*, in their exercise of all things: and in this manner, and by these fruits and effects doth the *Mystery* of G O D shew it self forth through his Children, in whom the *Mystery* is opened, that is hid in all other Creatures: And this is the Crown of the *Children* of the Lord, that are born from *Heaven*, and from *above*, that the *Mystery* of G O D is *felt* and *enjoyed* by them, and more manifest to them than in any other Creatures: And to know this
Mystery

Mystery of GOD, is *Life Eternal*; and to have the understanding of his Leadings, of his Judgment, of his Mercy, and of his Counsel, and of the operation of his Power; to feel this in the Understanding, this is *Joy*, and a *Crown of Glory*, where the *Mystery of GOD* is revealed in Spirit.

And as for the *Mystery of the Devil*, it is *darkness*, and in *darkness*; and it shews it self forth in the *Ungodly*, and in the sons of *Adam* in *transgression*, and in such onely doth this *Mystery of Iniquity*, and of *Sin*, and of *the Devil* display it self forth in all *unrighteousnesse* and *sin*; and that which is contrary to the Creator in *works*, *words* and *thoughts*; All these things are the manifestation of the *Mystery of the Devil*, and its *fruits* and *effects*, who is out of the Truth, who is veiled and covered, and hidden in the hearts of the *Ungodly*, and in the hearts of the sons of *Adam* in the *Fall*: This *Mystery* was not from the beginning, as the other, but when the *Devil* went out of the Truth, and had led *Man's mind* out of the Truth, and taken possession of the heart of *Man*, and become ruler and lord there, having gained authority over *Man* through *Man's* obedience to him, then began this *Mystery* to discover it self, and act it self through the Creature; and this was since the beginning: And though no other creature be an Agent to manifest forth this *Mystery* but *Man*, yet *Man* in his exercise of all Creatures, or all Creatures through the exercise of *Man* in *transgression*, there is shewed forth this *Mystery of Iniquity*, that secretly lurks in the spirits of ungodly men; which spirit of unrighteousness, the *Mystery of the Devil*, leads *Man* into all finfulness, of *drunkenness* and *uncleanness*, and such like, and hath polluted the Earth, and defiled all Creatures through *Man's* exercise in them: and this is truly an appearance of the *Mystery of the Devil*; yet he hath other appearances, and other makings-out of his *Mystery* (to wit) in a way of seeming Righteousness, and seeming Holiness, and seeming Purity; and these shew the *Mystery of Unrighteousness*, the *Mystery of the Devil*, who deceives the soul that is immortal of the enjoyment of the Creator, who is the *desire* of the *Immortal Soul*; and so through a *form*, and *likenesse*, and appearance

18 *Concerning the Mystery of the Devil, &c.*

pearance of a thing is the *Soul Immortal* deceived, and beguiled with that which hath appearances in it, but no *life* nor *substance*.

And though the *Mystery of Iniquity* be but one in it self, yet it manifests it self *divers wayes*; sometimes in *open prophanesse* and *wickedness*, and sometime in *seeming righteousness* and *holiness*, and in a *forms of Religion* without power: But the Lord is arisen to confound the *Mystery of the Devil* and *Iniquity*, and will discover it, and destroy it; for it is the *Mystery of Iniquity* that *worketh in the Children of Disobedience*, that are *strangers to God*; and through the operation of this *Mystery* are people kept at a distance from the Lord, and out of *Unity* and *Covenant* with Him: and this *Mystery of Iniquity* worketh *hiddeuly*, not known but in the *Eternal Eye*, which sees through the *spirit* of *Creatures*, and comprehendeth and fathometh over the *nature* of things, and can judge beyond the *appearance*, even in the *ground*, before *action* appeareth: for while people are professing and acting *Holiness* and *Righteousness* visibly, and yet not changed by the *Power* of the Lord, nor renewed in *nature*, *mind*, and *spirit*, from the *first Adam* to the *second*, the *Righteousness* and *Holiness* brought forth in that state, is but the acting of the *Mystery of Iniquity*, and the *Wolf* putting on the *Sheeps cloathing*; And this God will judge, and all *appearances* without *life*, and all *shews* without *substance*, All this will the Lord judge and confound, and bring to nought; for it is but the working of the *Mystery of the Devil*, who is out of the Truth.

And this *Mystery* hath more abounded since the dayes of the *Apostles*, than in *Ages* since the beginning, in as much as this *Mystery* hath operated and displayed it self forth in a *higher appearance* and *fairer shew* than ever it did before; for this *Mystery* hath sat in the *Temple of God*, and shewed it self to be God, and been worshipped *above all that is called God*: This *Mystery of Iniquity*, the *Man of Sin*, which hath put on the *Sheeps cloathing*, and shews it self as the *Sheep of Christ*, and as *Christians* and *Churches*; all which hath been for many *Ages* the manifestation of this *Mystery*, while that the *Mystery of the Devil* hath not been destroyed: but now is the Lord

Lord arisen, who will discover and destroy this *Mystery*, and save the Creature; and in the destruction of this *Mystery*, is the other *Mystery* revealed, (to wit) *The Mystery of God and of Christ*, and that is the *Mystery of Christ*, that destroyes the *Mysterie of Antichrist* and of the Devil: And now the Sons and Daughters of the Lord Almighty are coming into this *Mystery of God Eternal*, who is blessed for ever; and all that is coming to be *overthrown* which doth oppose it, and gainsay it; and there is nothing that can destroy or discover this *Mystery*, but the appearance of *Christ the Son of God*; for it is he that doth discover and destroy the *Mystery of Iniquity*, by the Spine of his Mouth, and by the Brightness of his Coming; and this are people coming to: The *Man of Sin* is to be thrown down, and the *Man of Righteousness*, the *Man of God* is revealed, and Sons and Daughters shall shew him forth in the World, and the *Mystery of God* shall shew it self forth over the World, and in Nations; and blessed are all they that come to the opening of this *Mystery of God*, which is the *Mystery of Life and Eternal Salvation*.

CHAP. III.

A Testimony concerning true Liberty of Conscience, what it is in it self, and how it is obtained; and what the true Guide and Rule is of the Exercise of Conscience.

THis is my Testimony, as I have received from the Lord: True Liberty of Conscience, is, *Liberty and Freedom of the Conscience from the bondage of Sin, and all Transgression past and present; and from whatsoever hath been, or is a Burden or Oppression upon the Conscience, whether inward or outward: the Conscience, I say, is at liberty when it is freed from the burden of the guilt of Sin past, and from the present temptation unto Sin: And till this is witnessed, there is no true Liberty of Conscience; For every thing whatsoever, which is Sin and Transgression*

gression against God, in *works or words*, brought forth by the Creature, is *bondage and a burden*, and oppresseth the *pure Conscience*: and therefore *perfect freedom* from all Sin and Transgression, is, where the body of Sin and Death is put off, and where the Evil is crucified, and the guilt of it taken away, and where the Conscience is truly exercised by the Spirit of Christ, which leadeth into all Truth, and preserveth from all Evil; Then is the Conscience at *liberty*, and this is *true Liberty of Conscience*, when this is brought forth in the Creature: For where Sin is brought forth, and *Transgression* lived in, there the Conscience is *bound*, and the Cord of Iniquity *imbondageth* the Conscience, and it hath not its *liberty* in the *Service of God*, nor from the *service of the Devil*, because the Spirit of God doth not exercise it; but the spirit of unrighteousness leadeth the mind into the *lusts* of this world, into *Lying, Swearing, Pride, Drunkenness, Hypocrisie, and Idolatry*; and the *guilt* of these things burdeneth and presseth down, and is a *bondage* upon the Conscience: and where the Conscience is bound by *unrighteousness within*, and by the *spirit of the world*, which leadeth contrary to the Lord, there is no power of man without can set that Conscience *free*, or give *liberty* to it; because the Cord of Iniquity hath bound it *within*, and the burden of guilt is upon it, and Conscience lies *under bondage*, unexercised with the Spirit of God, which is *free*, and *setteth free* the Conscience in the practice of all Good, and from the power and captivity of all Evil.

Therefore, before *true Liberty of Conscience* be witnessed, or any have *true Liberty* in Conscience, Iniquity must be *purged out*, and Sin *crucified*, and the body of Death *put off*, and Guilt *washed away*, and the Anointing *received* that leadeth into all Truth, and the Blood of Christ (the Seed) *felt*, that sprinkleth the Conscience from all sin, and works of the flesh, and washeth away all that which stains and defileth the Conscience, and then the *pure Conscience* hath its *true liberty* from the *bondage of all Evil*, and from the *guilt* thereof, and in the *exercise of all Good*; and this is *true Liberty of Conscience*; and thus it is attained, and by no other way nor means, than by the *sword of the Spirit of God*, which cutteth down the contrary: and where

where *Conscience* is thus freed *within* by the Power of the Lord, and delivered from the *bondage of Evil*, and from the *burden of all guilt*, and exercised *in all good* by the Spirit of God; Then nothing *without*, nor any Power of Man, which may work against such by Persecution, and act in *opposition* to such whose *Consciences* are thus freed, can *imbondage* the *Conscience* to Godwards, or bring it under a *burden* to Godwards, I say: for it is not altogether *bondage of Conscience*, or the *burden* or *oppression* upon his *Conscience*, that is set free, as aforesaid, though he is outwardly persecuted by Men; for that doth but hinder the exercise of his *Conscience* to manwards, but not to Godwards; for there his *Conscience* is free, in Joy and Peace, though, by reason of *Persecution*, he cannot have the exercise of it to men: I say, though such be put in *Prison*, *banished*, or whatsoever suffering be laid upon them, by any men, or Laws *without*; yet their *pure Conscience* is free and at liberty in it self to Godwards, through all this, and over it all; for he Lord hath set them free from all that *bondage* and *guilt* of *Iniquity*, which hath been a *bondage* upon their *Consciences within*: and whether they do suffer, or have *freedom* or *captivity* in their persons from men, yet is their *pure Conscience* at liberty to Godward, and in *perfect freedom* in it self, and to themselves, though for the Name of *Christ*, and his *Truth*, they be persecuted, and all evil done against them by evil men, and the exercise of their *pure Consciences* prevented, as to manwards.

For that which *defiles* the *Conscience*, doth bring it *under bondage*; but that which keeps it *pure*, and free from *pollution*, that keeps it in *liberty*, and in *perfect freedom* to God, over all Persecution and evil men, and unjust Laws, which would exercise dominion *in* and *over* the *Conscience* of the Saints, and bring them into *captivity*; as sometimes their persons are by evil Laws and Persecutors.

But who standeth in the *Power of the Lord*, and in the *exercise of the Spirit of God*, which *freeth* the *Conscience* in their own particulars (as I have said) doth not come into *bondage* in *Conscience* to Godwards, by Laws, or Men, but enjoyeth *freedom* and *liberty* therein; as much in *Sufferings* and in *Persecutions* under all the Cruelty of men, as in *doing* and *practices* when they

they are not persecuted; for in *Sufferings* the Conscience is exercised, and hath its liberty in *patience* and *forbearance*; And at *liberty* of persons, in practice it is exercised, and hath its Liberty, in *doing* and *performing* whatsoever the Spirit of the Father *moveth* and *leadeth* unto. And thus, where God hath freed the Conscience, and it is free, and at *liberty* in *Him*, and to *Him*; nothing without can bring it into *bondage* or *captivity*; but in all *conditions*, and in all *exercises*, whether *doing* or *suffering*, the pure Conscience is in *liberty* in it self, and in perfect freedom in God, through all, over all, and beyond all.

But now, there hath been a great Cry among many (that have professed Righteousness and Religion) for *Freedom of Conscience*, and *begging* and *craving* from the Powers of the Earth to tolerate *Liberty of Conscience*, and that they might have the *Liberty of their Conscience* in Religion: and thus some have been looking too much without for *Liberty of Conscience* from Men, and from Powers without them, before their Consciences were set free by the Lord within, and the band of Iniquity broken, and that burden of Iniquity and Guilt done away, which hath been a burden and bondage upon the Conscience: For, as I said, no Man, nor Powers of the Earth can truly free or give *liberty* to the Conscience, which is bound by the Cord of Iniquity within; But 'tis evident, the cry for *Liberty* hath not been so much for the Exercise of Conscience truly so, as for the Freedom each one of their Sect, and for the Liberty in practice of their own Worship and Conformity; and thereupon have divers men, of divers Sects, fought to the Powers of Men, and of the Earth, to grant them *Liberty of their Consciences*; when as it hath been rather, for the freedom to, and defence of, their Sect, and of their practices in their Worship, than for *Liberty of Conscience* truly so; for while they have cryed for Liberty from without, yet Sin, and Iniquity, and Transgression have lain upon their Conscience within, and they have sought from Men for the *Liberty* of their Sect, to practise their own Worship, which they have called *Liberty of Conscience*: And to this intent by some hath been the Cry for *Liberty of Conscience*, that their Sect, and their own Ways of Worship, might be defended from the violence of others, who have opposed their Practices
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and *Worships*: for people of *divers ways of Worship*, and of *divers Sects*, have all been at *strife* one with another, and *divided* one against another; and yet all professed *good Conscience*, and cryed for *Liberty* thereof from the Powers of the Earth; not but that the Powers of the Earth ought to grant *free Liberty* of Conscience in the exercise of every *Sect* of Religion, and to suffer all to profess and practise their *Religion*, while they walk justly and peaceably in a Land: But here hath lodged the *deceit* and *deceivableness* of the spirit of *Satan*, in the hearts of men, from the *least* to the *greatest* of all those *divers false Sects* and *Worshippers*; they have therein zealously gone on, and pleaded for their *Sects* and *Worship*, though never so *gross* or *dark*, and contrary to *Truth*, under the denomination of *Freedom* and *Liberty of good Conscience*; and the very *Title* and *Name* hath been the *Colour*, and deceived many, while a *false Worship*, and *false Practices* of *false Sects*, have gone under the name of *Liberty of good Conscience*; and thousands have been deceived, and blindly led into such a *false Sect*, and into such a *Profession*, to act and perform with great *Zeal*, *false Practices* in a *false Worship*, falsely supposing it to be out of a *good Conscience*, and that they have acted in the *liberty* thereof: yea, and many may suffer great and grievous things, and some the *losse* of their *Lives*, for the very *practice* of *false things*, and *false Worships*, in a *false Sect*, and yet under the name of *good Conscience*, and for *Liberty of Conscience*, as they may profess and believe.

But this may seem strange to be spoken to some, who may enquire how it comes to passe, and how this may be, that many may suffer *great* and *grievous Cruelties*; and some the *losse* of their *Lives*, for the *practice* of *false things*, and the exercise of *false Worships*, which they may suppose to be out of a *good Conscience*, and for *good Conscience sake*; whereas it is not truly so, nor rightly so: But how happeneth this, may some say?

I answer. This cometh to passe after this manner: Because *Conscience* is made of *that*, and of the *things* and *performances* which God requires not; and so there is a great zeal in the *doing* and *performing* of such a *Practice*, and such a *Worship*, when as the Lord hath not required these things at their hands;

hands ; and this is, because the Mind, and Heart, and Conscience is *dark*, and not *truly informed*, nor *guided* with the *Spirit of Truth*, and of the *Father* ; but a *false Spirit* ruleth and leadeth the *Conscience*, and it is not exercised with the *Spirit of the Father* that *leadeth into all Truth* : So I do acknowledge that Conscience may be *mis-led*, and *mis-guided*, and *mis-informed* ; and Conscience may be made of *doing such and such things which the Lord doth not require*, and there may be a *fear not taught of the Lord*, nor *received by the sence of his Presence*, but only received into the heart by the *Precepts of men*, *Example of others*, *Customs of times*, or the like ; and here the Conscience being not truly informed, nor guided by the Spirit of the Lord, there is a false fear and zealousness in the performing of such things which the Lord doth not require, nor his Spirit lead into the practice of ; but only the Tradition and Precepts of men, hath placed a *false Law and Commandment*, which requires a *false obedience* ; which many, whose understandings are blinded, and being without *true knowledge*, they zealously perform and practise as the *Worship of God*, thinking themselves bound in Conscience to *practise* such things, and not to leave them *undone* ; when as the Lord, and his righteous Spirit leadeth not to them, nor yet his just Law doth require the doing thereof ; but only a false Law and Commandment is received by Precepts and Traditions of men, or from looking upon the Practice of others : By such means as this, there is a false fear in a blind mis-guided Conscience, and a zeal without true knowledge.

And thus it was amongst the *Jews* in the Prophets dayes, they *sacrificed their Children*, and *cut themselves*, and *caused their Children to passe through the fire*, and did many things zealously ; when as saith the Lord, *Who hath required these things at your hands ? for they come not into my heart*. And *Paul* witnesseth the same of the *Jews* in his dayes, and bore them record, *that they had a Zeal, but it was not according to True Knowledge*. And thus the *Jews* were zealously performing that, as their *Duty*, and as out of a *good Conscience*, which the Lord required not at their hands ; and so they made Conscience to do that, which the Lord required not, and their
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Consciences were *mis-led*, and not *rightly informed*; and, as it was amongst the *Jews* in this case in the dayes of old, so now is it amongst the *Christians* in the Apostacy, their Conscience being *mis-guided* by a *false spirit*, they are doing and performing the things in *great Zeal*, and for the *exercise* of their *Consciences*, which the Lord doth not require of them: Thus do the *Papists*; they *do* and *practise* the things in *great Zeal*, and through a *false Fear* in their *blind Consciences*, which things are in themselves *Idolatry*, and not *commanded* nor *required* of the Lord; as in many particulars I might shew, even in many parts of their Worship and Religion, which out of a *Fear*, and *blind Zeal*, and *mis-guided Conscience*, they practise; which is in it self but *Idolatry*, and not *required* nor *accepted* of the Lord. And many things in relation to the *Protestants* Worship, and amongst all the several *false Sects* upon Earth; which are done and practised in *great Zeal*, and out of a *false Fear*, and as in pretence of a *good Conscience*, and yet are things in themselves *Idolatrous*, as done and practised by them: And this comes to passe, as I have said, because the Conscience is *mis-informed*, and a *false spirit* guides and rules in the exercise of *Conscience*, and the *understanding* of the People is *blinded*, and they know not but they do well, though their minds are captivated, and their *minds* and *judgments* in error; and though there be a *sincerity* to Godwards, and a *desire* of Him in the bottom, among some People of all Forms and Sects, and some of all are zealous towards God in their practices, in their Religion and Worships; yet among all People, and the Churches that have been for many Generations, there hath been great *Error in Judgment*, and much *blindness* in *mind*, and the *Conscience* falsly exercised towards God, and the *Superscription* hath been, *To the Unknown God*; and He hath been *ignorantly worshipped*, and the Spirit of the Lord hath not truly exercised Peoples Consciences, nor guided their Zeal, nor been Ruler in the Judgment; And by this means the *sincerity* and *humility* towards God hath been eaten out, and alwayes quenched, and the bare practice of things and profession of Religion in the *outward appearance*, hath been more lookt at, than the *Presence* of God felt in the *Practices*: and

hands ; and this is, because the Mind, and Heart, and Conscience is *dark*, and not *truly informed*, nor *guided* with the *Spirit of Truth*, and of the *Father* ; but a *false Spirit* ruleth and leadeth the *Conscience*, and it is not exercised with the *Spirit of the Father* that *leadeth into all Truth* : So I do acknowledge that *Conscience* may be *mis-led*, and *mis-guided*, and *mis-informed* ; and *Conscience* may be made of *doing such and such things which the Lord doth not require*, and there may be a *fear not taught of the Lord*, nor *received by the sence of his Presence*, but only received into the heart by the *Precepts of men*, *Example of others*, *Custom of times*, or the like ; and here the *Conscience* being not truly informed, nor guided by the *Spirit of the Lord*, there is a *false fear* and *zealousness* in the performing of such things which the *Lord* doth not require, nor his *Spirit* lead into the practice of ; but only the *Tradition* and *Precepts of men*, hath placed a *false Law* and *Commandment*, which requires a *false obedience* ; which many, whose understandings are blinded, and being without *true knowledge*, they zealously perform and practise as the *Worship of God*, thinking themselves bound in *Conscience* to *practise* such things, and not to leave them *undone* ; when as the *Lord*, and his righteous *Spirit* leadeth not to them, nor yet his just *Law* doth require the doing thereof ; but only a *false Law* and *Commandment* is received by *Precepts* and *Traditions of men*, or from looking upon the *Practice of others* : By such means as this, there is a *false fear* in a *blind mis-guided Conscience*, and a *zeal without true knowledge*.

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Consciences were *mis-led*, and not *rightly informed*; and, as it was amongst the *Jews* in this case in the dayes of old, so now is it amongst the *Christians* in the Apostacy, their Conscience being *mis-guided* by a *false spirit*, they are doing and performing the things in *great Zeal*, and for the exercise of their Consciences, which the Lord doth not require of them: Thus do the *Papists*; they do and practise the things in *great Zeal*, and through a *false Fear* in their *blind Consciences*, which things are in themselves *Idolatry*, and not *commanded* nor *required* of the Lord; as in many particulars I might shew, even in many parts of their Worship and Religion, which out of a *Fear*, and *blind Zeal*, and *mis-guided Conscience*, they practise; which is in it self but *Idolatry*, and not *required* nor *accepted* of the Lord. And many things in relation to the *Protestants* Worship, and amongst all the several *false Sects* upon Earth; which are done and practised in *great Zeal*, and out of a *false Fear*, and as in pretence of a *good Conscience*, and yet are things in themselves *Idolatrous*, as done and practised by them: And this comes to passe, as I have said, because the Conscience is *mis-informed*, and a *false spirit* guides and rules in the exercise of Conscience, and the *understanding* of the People is *blinded*, and they know not but they do well, though their minds are captivated, and their *minds* and *judgments* in error; and though there be a *sincerity* to Godwards, and a *desire* of Him in the bottom, among some People of all Forms and Sects, and some of all are zealous towards God in their practices, in their Religion and Worships; yet among all People, and the Churches that have been for many Generations, there hath been great *Error in Judgment*, and much *blindness* in mind, and the Conscience falsely exercised towards God, and the Superscription hath been, *To the Unknown God*; and He hath been *ignorantly worshipped*, and the Spirit of the Lord hath not truly exercised Peoples Consciences, nor guided their Zeal, nor been Ruler in the Judgment; And by this means the *sincerity* and *humility* towards God hath been eaten out, and alwayes quenched, and the bare practice of things and profession of Religion in the *outward appearance*, hath been more lookt at, than the *Presence of God* felt in the *Practices*: and

the Zeal hath been more for the *performance* of such things, than for God *purely enjoyed* through them : And thus it hath been through *Christendom* in the Apostacy since the dayes of the Apostles and true Churches ; Many have erred in their Judgments, and the Zeal for God hath proceeded out of the *error of Judgments*, and out of *mis-information of Conscience*, and some other thing, than only the Spirit of God, hath ruled in the *Judgment*, and been the exercise of peoples *Consciences*. And this is a hint of things about *true Liberty of Conscience* ; and about the *Error in Judgment* ; and the *blind Zeal in captivated sincerity*.

Now it may be objected, *What is the only absolute Rule of the right Exercise of Conscience ; and when are Mens Consciences truly guided ?*

To this I answer, The only chief and perfect Rule of the *right Exercise of Conscience*, both to God and *all men*, is, *The SPIRIT of CHRIST* : for it is only *that* which can truly guide the Conscience, in *Faith, Doctrine and Worship*, and in all things towards God ; even the *Spirit of CHRIST*, which is the gift of the Father, it only *leadeth into all Truth*, as it is written ; and all, whose Consciences are guided and exercised by it, are in *Unity and Peace* in their *Worship, Doctrine, and Religion* ; for the *Spirit of CHRIST* is but *one* in it self, and guideth the Conscience into the *exercise of one Truth and Faith* ; and in this same Spirit is the *true Union and Communion of Saints in Religion and Worship*, and this is manifest through the Scriptures ; for the Apostle exhorted to *walk in the Spirit*, and *by it* ; and as many as walked by the Rule of the Spirit, *peace was upon them* : and it is the *Spirit of CHRIST*, the *Everlasting Comforter*, that *teacheth all Truth* ; and the *Holy Anointing of the Spirit* that dwelt in the Saints, *taught them all things* ; and they needed *no man to teach them, but as the Anointing that dwelt in them*. And then are Mens Consciences truly guided in all the wayes of Righteousness, when the Spirit of God guideth the Conscience, and is the Rule of all *Faith, Doctrine and Practices*.

So that *Traditions of Men, Prescriptions of Councils, Antiquity of Time, Commandments of Men, nor Example of others,*
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without the *Spirit of Christ*, cannot be the *only true Rule of the Exercise of Conscience*; for all these things are changeable, alterable, and subject to variations, and therefore cannot infallibly guide the Conscience in the Duty towards God, nor rightly exercise the Conscience in *Unity and Peace*; but while a Nation, or Kingdom, or People walk by the Rule of *Traditions, Prescriptions, Commandments of Men, Example of others*, or the like, they erre in Judgment, in Faith, Doctrine and Worship, and are all divided, and in Contentions about these matters, because their Rule of Conscience and Judgment is *doubtful and alterable*, and not *infallible*; and therefore they have no perfect assurance of God's acceptance to them in their *Faith and Religion*, nor perfect Peace and Unity in their *Faith and Worship*; But as the Rule of their *Consciences* in their Duty towards God is divers, some makes *one thing* and some *another* their Rule; so are they divers and divided, in what they hold, profess and practise, and are but of *great Babylon* in their Religion: And because that something besides the Spirit of God exerciseth the Conscience; therefore is it, that here are so many wayes and Sects of Religion and kinds of Worship in *Christendom*, and among *Christians*, while the *Spirit of Christ only* is not the *Rule of Judgment, and Exercise of Conscience* to God and Man; for the only perfect Rule of Conscience in the exercise to God, is the *Spirit of Christ*, and not any other thing.

And now, whosoever shall persecute the Exercise of *Conscience*, when guided by the Spirit of Christ, such persecute *Christ Jesus*: And this is Persecution for the Name of *Christ*, when Sufferings are inflicted, as Reproaches, Imprisonment, or whatsoever, for the exercise of Conscience towards God by *his Spirit*: but, and if any are persecuted for *Religion-sake*, only so, if that in such their Exercise of *Religion* they are not guided by the Spirit of Christ, yet that suffering is a kind of Persecution also: If, I say, the suffering be only for, and because of their *Religion-sake*, and they walk justly and righteously as men; so that (as is signified about the middle of this Chapter) though some may profess *good Conscience*, and cry for *Liberty thereof* in their false Sect and Religion,

not taught them by the Spirit of Christ; yet the Civil Magistrate ought not to punish and use violence to such for their Religion; but if they do, they persecute, and the Lord will lay it to their charge. But yet this is *safe* for all, first to obtain *true Liberty of Conscience* to Godwards, and to receive the *Spirit of Christ*, to be taught only by it, in the Exercise of *Conscience* and *Religion*, that they may not erre in *Conscience* and *Judgement* in Spiritual matters, nor suffer wrongfully under pretence of *Rightconscience*-sake, when as it is not truly so.

CHAP

C H A P. IV.

Concerning the Diversity of Judgements in
R E L I G I O N.

TO all ye that are of divers Judgments and Opinions in, and concerning *Spiritual matters*; who are divided about matters of *Faith, Doctrine, Worship, and Church-Government*; some of you holding *one thing*, and some *another* different and contrary to that; being diversly divided in *mind and heart*, concerning the matters that are *one* in themselves, and to which you all assent, as to the things in themselves, and yet are different and contrary-minded about the *self-same things*: To you all I am moved to write, that so ye may be informed perfectly; first, What the *Cause is of your Divisions*, and *why it is thus amongst you*: And secondly, Of the *bad Effects and Fruits* such *Divisions* have brought forth: And lastly, the *means and way of Reconciliation*, that ye may come into *Love, and Peace, and Unity with God, and one with another*, in all things pertaining to his Kingdom.

First, The Cause of your Divisions, and of the Diversities of Judgements and Opinions that are amongst you concerning the things and matters of God's Kingdom, is, *Because you want the Spirit of God to guide you, and it is not the Rule of your Knowledge and Judgment*; and you wanting the *Spirit of God*, in which is Unity among Saints, therefore is it
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you are so divided, and divers, and different, and contrary one to another in these things ; it is, because ye want the *Spirit of God*, I say, which only teacheth the *true Knowledge of God*, and gives an *Understanding in all his Wayes and Matters* ; It is the *Spirit of God* that teacheth *true Faith, true Doctrine, and true Worship*, and all things about *Church, Ministry, and Religion* ; and if that you had the *Spirit of God* in you, and were taught and guided by it, it would teach you into *one Faith, and one Truth*, and into the *true Worship*, and into the *true Church-Government*, and you would be in *unity and peace* ; And if you all had the *Spirit of God* that gave forth the Scriptures, and by which Spirit the Saints of God were guided in dayes past, it would teach you into *Unity*, and to be of *one mind, one heart, and one soul* in all the matters pertaining to God's Kingdom, in *Faith, Worship, Doctrine*, and all things else ; if you had the *Spirit of God*, I say, and were taught by it, then you would have *Unity with God, and one with another*, in all his wayes, and there would have been no *Division nor Contention* amongst you about *Spiritual matters* ; but because you want that, therefore you have *strife and division* amongst you, even throughout all *Christendom* ; Here's a Nation and a Kingdom holding such a *Faith and Worship*, and there's another People holding *Faith and Worship* contrary to that ; and *here's one* Sect of people, and *there's another*, different in *Faith, Judgment, and Opinion* ; and this is a *shame* to whole *Christendom*, that *all* should profess *Christ Jesus*, and *Faith* in him, and *Salvation* by him, and his *Doctrine and Worship*, and yet be in *strife and division*, and in great

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contentions concerning the same ; some holding and practizing *one* manner of *Faith, Worship and Doctrine*, and others holding *contrary and different* ; and this shews that ye are all fallen from the Life of Christianity, as it was held in the Apostles dayes amongst the true Churches ; for they were of *one heart, mind, soul and spirit*, as it is written ; they were of *one Faith, of one Worship, of one Doctrine*, and had *one Way of Church-Government* ; and this continued amongst the Churches of Christ, till there were some that had *erred* from the Spirit of God in their *own Consciences*, and then they also erred in *Faith, in Doctrine*, and in all other things relating to God : And these were the *Apostate Christians* that had erred from the *Spirit*, and *divided* themselves from the *true Church*, and *differed* in *Judgment* amongst themselves ; and this was, because they had erred from the Spirit of God, which would have kept them in *unity with God, and one with another* : for the Spirit is *the Bond of Peace*, and the *Seal of the Covenant of Love* among the Saints. So now all ye who are divided in your *Knowledge and Judgment*, and are in *contention* one with another about the matters pertaining to God's Kingdom, you are the *Apostate Christians*, and you are without the Spirit of Christ : The first *Apostate Christians* erred from the Spirit, and so became divided from the *true Faith*, and from the *true Worship*, and also *among themselves* ; and you never yet received the Spirit of Christ that you might come into *unity and Fellowship with God, and one with another* ; and that is the reason of all your Divisions in Religious matters, because you have not received the Spirit of Christ, to teach you,
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and to unite your hearts to God, and one to another; but you having the Scriptures, traditionally, by descent through Ages, which do describe and declare of that *Faith* and *Doctrine*, and of the *Worship* and *Church-Government*, which were among the Saints of old, which they held and practised, and from the Scriptures which declare of the things, from thence you take up a Conceit and false Judgment, and an Imitation, and a false Conformity; and then each sort of you call that your *Faith* and *Church-Government*, and some after *one manner* of form, and some after *another*; and thus you are divided, because you want the Spirit of God that gave forth the Scriptures; which Spirit did work *true Faith* in the hearts of them that gave them forth in dayes of old, and it taught them *Worship, Faith, Doctrine*, and all things concerning Gods Kingdom, for *the Spirit led them into all Truth*; and now you wanting the same Spirit that wrought in them, and taught them; and you having but their words (to wit, the *Scriptures*) from thence, in the Wisdom which is below, and in the carnal Reason, and in the first mans understanding, each Nation takes up a conceit, that it is so and so, and takes up an Imitation of *Worship* and *Church-Government* according to their own sensual wisdom, and according to the bredth and depth of their Conceits; and then imitates, and that severally and diversly, and in a divided manner; and this is amongst *Kingdoms*, and amongst *Neighbours* and *Brethren*, this Division in matters of *Faith, Worship* and *Doctrine*, and *Church-Government*; and yet all these have had the name of *Christians*, and *Church-Members*, and *Worshippers of God*, but yet are of many wayes
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of Worship, holding different and contrary Principles of *Faith* and *Doctrine*, and also of *Worship* and *Church-Government*; and thus have *Nations*, *Cities* and *Countries* been for many Ages; and thus hath it been, and is at this day amongst the *Apostate Christians*, that want the *Spirit* of Christ to be their Rule, of *Knowledge*, of *Judgment*, and *Worship*, and of their *Faith* and *Practices* in Religion. And this is a shame to whole Christendom, amongst whom the spirit of *Antichrist* hath entered, which hath thus divided *Nations*, *Cities*, *Neighbours* and *Brothers*; for all these Divisions about Religion amongst the *Apostate Christians*, are of *Antichrist*, and not of *God*; it is that spirit of *Antichrist* that hath wrought all these Divisions, and planted them in the minds of People.

Secondly: Concerning the *bad Effects* of these Divisions in matters of *Faith* and *Worship*, as I have said: This Division in Religion hath begotten and brought forth very much Evil throughout the World, much heart-burning, envy, hard-heartedness, strife and contention between *Kings* and *Rulers*, and between *Nations*, between *Cities*, between *Neighbours*, and between *Brothers*; this Division hath wrought *bad Effects* amongst all these; so that it hath brought forth much War and Bloodshed between *Kings*, and great Persecutions between *Rulers* and their *People*, and great Debate and Strife amongst *Neighbours* and *Friends*; so that great Murders and losse of many Lives have been produced and brought forth upon this Quarrel, about Difference in matters of *Faith* and *Religion*; and *Antichrist* hath not only divided people in *Judgment*, but hath also provoked people into rage and envy,

to the *killing* and *destroying* of one another ; and even that Division about *Spiritual things*, begotten by *Antichrist* amongst *false Christians*, hath been turned into *personal enmity*, and brought forth in the end, *murdering* and *killing* the bodies of Thousands, when the original debate hath arisen about *Church-Government*, or *Points of Religion* ; and this is the *woful Effect* that *Division of Religion* hath brought forth in all Christendom. And all this *Fruit* and *Effects*, as well as the *Cause* of it, hath been of *Antichrist*, and of the *Dragon* and the *Devil* throughout the World ; all this *Persecution* and *spoyling of Goods*, *Imprisoning of Persons*, *taking away of Lives*, and *Banishment* ; and whatsoever *Persecution* otherwise that hath risen and been inflicted upon any, for and because of *Differences in Religion*, and about *Faith* and *Worship*, all this hath been of *Antichrist* ; and even all *Laws* made for that end, and all *Executors* of such *Laws*, and all *Penalties* of such *Laws* ; and all *Wars* and *Bloodshed* whatsoever, that have ensued only and upon the account of *Differences in Religion* ; that being the first, and the only ground of the *Quarrel* ; All this hath been of *Antichrist*, and it came out of the *bottomless Pit* ; and never rose from the *Spirit of God*, but from the *Antichristian spirit of Envy* and *Wickedness*, that hath first divided people about matters of *Faith* and *Religion*, and then provoked them to *envy* and *malice*, stirring up Kings to fight one against another, that was not of their *Religion*, but *different* and *contrary* to it : And so the hearts of Rulers have been stirred up to *persecute* all under them, that were different and contrary in matters of *Faith*, *Worship*, and *Religion* ; and this the
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spirit of *Antichrist* hath effected throughout Christendom: and so each King that hath been strongest, would maintain the Principles of his *Faith*, and the Practice of *Religion*, according to his own Conceit, in his Dominions: And thus hath *Religion*, *Worships*, and *Church-Government* been set up and stood amongst Apostate Christians throughout the World, by *Force* and *Power*, and by *violent Laws*, and through *Persecutions* and *Murders*; and all this hath been by the *spirit of Antichrist*: and the *Spirit of God* hath had no hand in those matters, for the setting up and contriving of *false Faith*, *false Worship*, and *false Church-Government*; all this hath depended upon the Powers and Authorities of the Earth, through many Ages: and what Religion, and Church-Government, or Way of Worship, that Kings or Queens have set up, that only hath been promoted; but all the rest persecuted and restrained by force and violence; and all this hath been of *Antichrist*.

And now to all ye that are of divers Judgments in matters of *Faith* and *Worship* in *Religion*, this is a *Caution* to you all; and I do warn you all in the presence of the living God, that though ye be divided in the *belief* and *practice* of Spiritual things, yet live in *peace* and *unity* with all men, in all outward relations, and do not envy nor hurt one anothers *Persons*; though you are in difference about *Religion*, yet suffer not that *Difference* to grow into *persecuting* or *envying* one anothers persons, but seek to inform one another, and instruct one another in the Spirit of Meekness, and persuade one another out of that which is *evil*, to that which is *good*, by *patience*, *gentleness*, and *long-suffer-*

ing; and do not force one another by *violence*, nor persecute one another, neither by *words*, *evil-deeds*, nor *actions*, but live in *love* to the persons every one of another; and fight not with *Persons*, nor kill one anothers *Persons* with carnal weapons about *Religion*, but take the *spiritual weapons*, and war with the *Spirit* against the *evil one* in one another; and *love* persons though they are *enemies*, and this is Christ's Doctrine; and never hereafter let your *divisions* about *Spiritual* things grow into *personal quarrels*, to the envying or killing one another. And this is a Charge to you all in the presence of the living God.

Lastly, The Means and Way to be reconciled and to come out of all Division and Strife, and to come into Peace with God, and one with another, about Faith and Church-Government, is by the Spirit of God; and every one of you in particular must receive the Spirit of Christ, that it may work in every one of your hearts, true Faith, and teach every one of you the true Worship of God, and the way of Doctrine, and true Church-Government; it is the Spirit of Christ in every one both male and female, that must reconcile and bring into unity with God, and one with another, in all Spiritual things; for it is that which is the bond of Peace and Love among true Christians; and it is that which reconciles peoples hearts into oneness: And if you receive that Spirit, every particular person of you, it will bring you to be of one Faith, of one Worship, and then your Doctrine and Church-Government will agree: if you receive the Spirit that gave forth the Scriptures, it will work in you the same Faith, and lead you in the same

same way of Worship which the Scriptures speak of, and then you will cease taking up *Conceits*, and making *Imitations* of *Church-Governments* from the Letter, but the *same Spirit* will work in your hearts *Faith* and *Knowledge* in the fulfilling of the Scriptures; and this is *true Christianity*, and the other is the way of all *Apostate Christians*, all *Imitations* from the Letter without the Spirit as gave it forth: for there is a great deal of difference between making a *Conformity* in the *Imitation* of a *Worship*, and *Church-Government*, from the Scriptures *without the Spirit*, and between the Spirits teaching and leading into the *same Truth*, and *same Worship* and *Church-Government*, which the Scriptures speak of; the one is of *Christ*, and is in *unity*, *peace*, and *everlasting fellowship*; the other is of *Antichrist*, and is in *division*, *strife* and *contention*: so you must all wait for the *Spirit of Truth*, that you may receive it, to *work* in your hearts, to *teach* you, and *lead* you, or else you will never come to *true Union* and *everlasting Fellowship* with *God*, and *one with another*; neither can you be of *one true Faith*, in *one true way of Worship*, nor in *one way of Church-Government*, except you receive the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit. And these be the words of the Lord God unto you all.

Now as concerning the way of *Uniformity* in *Faith* and *Church-Government*, imposed upon *Nations*, and *Countries* and *Cities*, by *cruel Laws* of *Kings* and *Rulers*, as hath been the practice through *Christendom*, to cause a whole *Nation* and *Kingdom* to *bow* and *conform* to such *Principles* of *Faith*, and *Worship*, and *Church-Government*, according to the will and pleasure of

of a King, or a Ruler, such *Uniformity* and *Union* and *Fellowship* among Christians hath not been of *Christ*, where people have walked by *Imitation*, and conformed to the *Commands of Men* in such a *Faith*, or to such a *Worship* or *Church-Government*; this hath not been of God, neither could this *Unity* stand or remain for ever, but it hath *perished*, and will *perish* where ever it is; and that *Faith* and *Worship*, and *Church-Government* which is so set up, and so held, will *never save the Soul*, nor *comfort it*; but it is blasted of God: whilst a Nation, or a Kingdom, or a People have *Uniformity*, or hold *Faith*, *Worship*, or *Religion*, either in the *ignorance* of their *Consciences*, or *contrary* to their *Consciences*, by the force of *Mens Commandments*, and not by the *perswasion* of the Spirit of God in their *own Consciences*; such Conformity, I say, is of *Antichrist*, and not of the *Father*, neither can it stand in the Day of the Lord; but the fire of his *Wrath* will consume it: All the Apostate Christians in their *Uniformity of Faith*, *Worship*, and *Church-Government*, which is some other way, or by some other means, than only by the Spirit of God, is of *Antichrist*, and will be confounded: for there is no *true Unity* and *Fellowship* in the *Wayes of God*, and his *Truth* and *Worship*, but what is in the *Spirit*, and that *Unity* will stand for ever, for it is in *GOD*; not *feigned*, neither because of the *love* and *fear* of this world, as the other is. That *Uniformity* in *Faith* and *Worship* which is *forced* upon People, is all but *hypocrisie* and *deceit*, both to God and man, and God will judge it in the *Imposers*, and *Imposed*: Therefore no true *Unity* in *Faith*, nor *Worship*, nor in *Religion*, but what is *in* and *by* the *Spirit of God*: for as Christians
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come to divide themselves into many wayes, and into divers Sects when they went from the Spirit of God, and lost it, and whilst they have been *without the Spirit* they have remained in *Division, Strife, and Contention* about *Religion*; so now the *means and way of true Union and Fellowship, and Faith*, is by *receiving the Spirit of God again*, and not any otherwise: and as Christians are brought again to *receive* this Spirit, and *walk therein*, all *division and strife* about Religion will *cease*, and the cursed fruits and effects thereof will also *wither* and be no more; but then *Unity, Peace, Blessedness, Everlasting Fellowship and Comfort with the Lord, and one with another*, in all his Ways, will be witnessed amongst all People.

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